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RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 1697  
RUEHKB/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 0272  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0094  
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [RW](#)  
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR SEZIBERA ON FOREIGN MINISTER TRIP TO  
KINSHASA

REF: KINSHASA 1063

Classified By: Ambassador Michael R. Arietti, reason 1.4 (B/D)

11. (C) Summary. Ambassador met with Great Lakes Envoy Ambassador Richard Sezibera on September 6 to discuss the recent meeting in Kinshasa between the Rwandan and Congolese Foreign Ministers (which Sezibera attended). Sezibera described the interactions as "about what we expected," and said the fundamental problem centered on which negative force merited immediate action. The Congolese repeatedly characterized action against renegade general Laurent Nkunda as of primary importance (and strictly an internal matter for the Congolese government to address). Action against the FDLR could wait. The Rwandans, said Sezibera, argued that the FDLR should be confronted first, and once disposed of, they would create conditions in which Nkunda "would be no longer needed" by the populations he protects, and could be dealt with fairly easily. Sezibera praised the new (or newly revived) mechanisms put in place, including the Joint Verification Teams for security issues, the Joint Working Teams for borders, and the Evaluation Mechanism at the Ministerial level. He expressed concern at reports that the Congolese armed forces were re-equipping the FDLR, and that the heavy concentrations of Congolese troops in the Kivus would soon prove unmanageable, bereft of logistical support, and likely to commit extensive human rights abuses as they pillaged to support themselves. For Sezibera, the Congolese were confronting the wrong foe, in the wrong way, at the wrong time. (FYI: MFA has just invited diplomatic missions to a September 7 briefing by FM Murigande on the trip.) End summary.

12. (C) In his September 6 meeting with Ambassador Arietti, Great Lakes Envoy Ambassador Richard Sezibera described the initial two-hour behind-closed-doors session with the Congolese Foreign Minister (also attended by the GODRC Defense, Interior, and Energy Ministers) as "difficult," although the two teams did achieve ultimate agreement on cooperative mechanisms as described in the final communique. He noted that Defense Minister Diemu appeared particularly unhappy with the offer by the Rwandans to once again mediate between Nkunda and the Congolese, and by Murigande's repeated suggestion that "the heart of the Nkunda problem is the FDLR." Diemu appeared unbending on the question of military operations against Nkunda -- the Congolese had spent significant time and energy preparing an offensive against Nkunda, Diemu said, and the military effort must continue.

13. (C) Sezibera said that his government is particularly

concerned by the prospect of a weakened or defeated Nkunda and a strengthened FDLR, which might then move closer to Rwanda's borders, with the potential to engage in direct military operations against the GOR. He noted his particular concern of reports that the Congolese military were re-supplying the FDLR with "relatively heavy" weapons that did not appear to be the usual sort of small-scale purchase and bartering engaged in by local Congolese commanders in the past. "Anti-aircraft guns and 107mm howitzer shells," he said, are not small arms. He added there were also indications that the Congolese military was engaged in joint planning meetings with the FDLR.

¶4. (C) There was no doubt, Sezibera contended, that the Congolese military had started the fighting, in fact, he said, Kabila himself had ordered it. So far the results were mixed, with Nkunda forces pushed out of some positions and having gained others. He pointedly noted the poor performance of Congolese forces in the past, and said the very heavy buildup of troops in the Kivus was "unmanageable," could not be sustained logistically, and would likely result in extensive human rights abuses as the troops sought to support themselves by pillaging local populations. He noted that in the Kinshasa meeting the Congolese had initially complained of the supposed entry of six Rwandan infantry companies into the Kivus, but quickly relented, apparently acknowledging the weakness of the charge.

¶5. (C) He further stated that as far as the GOR is concerned, the Tripartite-Plus structure agreed upon at the recent Chiefs of Defense Staff (CHODS) meeting in Kigali (ref B) should continue, with the J2/J3 meetings in Kisangani, the follow-on CHODS review of their planning, and then proposed military action at the end of the month. Sezibera

doubted that any sustained action could result from those efforts, given the ongoing military campaign against Nkunda (and with the object of those end-of-September military actions still unnamed).

¶6. (C) On the question of normalizing relations with the GDRC, Sezibera said the matter had "not really come up" in the conversations -- the Congolese did not wish to discuss normalization, and the Rwandans had not mentioned it. He did not believe, for example, that the opening of consulates would be a useful first step; normalization had to occur with the exchange of embassies in the respective capitals.

¶7. (C) Briefly touching on the continuing dispute with the Ugandans over the alleged existence of the PRA, Sezibera flatly called it a domestic political issue for Uganda, with the Museveni government seeking to brand his principal political opponent Cyiza Besigye a "negative force" with the assistance of the Tripartite-Plus process. Little or no proof had been submitted by the Ugandans concerning the PRA, and he suggested that if a special Tripartite-Plus were constituted to look into it, they would find "nothing to support Ugandan claims." He was pessimistic that this issue could be sorted out at the bilateral political level.

¶8. (C) Comment. Sezibera clearly saw value in continuing discussions with Congolese counterparts, and praised the use of various joint mechanisms to assure regular treatment of security and other issues on a bilateral basis. (FYI. He noted that until the DRC last year pulled out of the Joint Verification Commission, there had been 21 investigations of cross border allegations by joint Rwanda/DRC/MONUC teams.) However, while GOR accepts that the DRC cannot permit Nkunda to continue as an independent military force in the Kivus, it regrets that Kinshasa is following the military and not the political course to address the problem. The Rwandans fear unintended results if fighting with Nkunda's forces continues, and the FDLR can expand its reach and its attacks. According to Sezibera, the Congolese appear determined to confront the wrong foe. End comment.

ARIETTI